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# The University of Montana

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **UM RESEARCHER REPORTS 1992 INCREASE IN WOOD PRODUCTS PRICES, PRODUCTION**

#### **MISSOULA --**

Higher wood product prices in 1992 led to increased production from Montana's wood products industry, reports The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

In cooperation with the Montana Wood Products Association, the bureau compiled quarterly figures for the 29 plants responsible for more than 90 percent of the state's total wood and paper product output.

Charles Keegan, director of the bureau's forest industry research, says higher prices occurred due to modest increases in lumber and plywood demand and because of timber supply curtailments, particularly on the West Coast.

Montana's 1992 estimated lumber production was 1,414 million board feet, up from 1,351 million board feet in 1991. Plywood production was also up from 1991 levels, says Keegan, adding that the state's plywood mills produced 699 million square feet in 1992, compared to 605 million square feet in 1991.

Production employment in Montana's forest products industry was 4,383 in 1992, up from 4,160 in 1991. Production wages were \$134.7 million in 1992, up from \$123 million in 1991.

So far in 1993, Keegan says, prices have increased substantially. February 1993 lumber prices were 50 percent higher than February 1992 prices. However, he says, limited timber

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availability may preclude any dramatic increases in production in Montana.

The above figures refer only to production workers at sawmills, plywood plants, pulp and paper mills, particleboard and fiberboard plants, and utility pole plants. These production workers account for about 40 percent of the workers in Montana's forest products industry. Estimates do not include the several thousand workers in logging, trucking and other related jobs.

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